

## “HE WENT IN TO STAY WITH THEM”

Luke 24:13–35

Key Verse: 24:29

“...but they urged him strongly, saying, ‘Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.’ So he went in to stay with them.”

Are you urgent about anything? Something you *really want*, or think is *really important*? Too often, we’re urgent about things that are not so important. Usually it’s something we think we have to do, a task that, if it doesn’t get done, we imagine will be a catastrophe. But is that really true? In today’s unique Bible passage, after he’s crucified, the Risen Jesus comes and walks alongside two of his followers as they’re leaving Jerusalem. They’re not from among the twelve; they’re just two ordinary followers of his. At this point, they’re confused, sad, and hopeless. But on a long walk on a Sunday afternoon, Jesus helps *them*, of all people, and in such a gentle and patient way. He invests so much time in being with them. Through encountering the Risen Jesus, these two gain a clear understanding of the gospel and their hearts burn. This encounter shows that no matter who we are, we can experience the Risen Jesus like they did. But how? Also, we want to learn from our Lord Jesus how to help others. Most of all, today’s passage highlights the point of the gospel: to have Jesus come and stay with us. Today we want to reflect on what his “staying with us” means. Is this what we’re most urgent about: *Jesus, please stay with us!?* Let’s see what God does for those who experience the Risen Christ in this way.

### I. Jesus draws near to them (13–16)

Look at verse 13 (ESV). The phrase “That very day” refers to the first day of the week, Sunday, at early dawn (verse 1). That was when the women went to the tomb with the spices they had prepared. There, they heard from angels that Jesus had risen, just as he said (6–7). That morning the women returned to all the others and told them these things (9). But the men responded in unbelief (11). Now, a bit later, two of them are heading for Emmaus, about seven miles away. After the crucifixion, these two don’t find any reason to stay in Jerusalem. They’re discouraged, and probably scared to stay among his enemies.

Look at verse 14. As they walk along, they’re still talking with each other about all the things that have happened. In verse 15 Luke adds the word “discussing,” which literally means “inquiring together.” It’s not a casual but an intense conversation. Why are these two *still* inquiring, *still* asking? It’s because it’s all been so unexpected and hard to understand. Obviously they’ve given their hearts to following Jesus. But his life ended so abruptly, so violently. What did it all mean? Even as they keep going over it, they can’t find answers.

Look at verse 15. When they’re so helpless, Jesus himself shows up. He doesn’t stay aloof from them; it says he “draws near.” He comes to help them when no one else can. Luke adds that he “went with them.” *We’re* supposed to go with *Jesus*, but in this case, *Jesus* went with *them*. They’re leaving Jerusalem, which seems to be the wrong direction, yet Jesus still goes with

them. Look at verse 16. It often happens that Jesus is with us, but we can't recognize him. It's the same Jesus they'd been with for over three years, so why can't they recognize him? It's because they don't just need to see the miracle that he's risen (16:30–31); they first need to understand what his death and resurrection mean.

## II. A conversation with the Risen Jesus (17–27)

In verse 17 Jesus initiates the conversation. He asks what they're talking about. How do they respond? It says, "And they stood still, looking sad." Why are they sad? Obviously, after Jesus is killed, they're so disappointed. In fact, they're full of sorrow. It's written all over their faces. Even all their talking can't alleviate their sadness. Then one of them, named Cleopas, speaks up: "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" (18) What just happened in Jerusalem is the biggest news ever. How can this stranger not know about it? What rock has he been living under? Jesus asks quietly, "What things?" (19a) Of course he knows; what they're talking about is all about him and what he's just been through. But he asks in order to engage them, so that they can open up and eventually begin to *hear him*.

Read verse 19b. "And they said to him, 'Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people...'" They say great things about him, but at this point they see him only as a man, a prophet. Still, they love him. Who he was and what he did for over three years was so amazing, all the people know it. Read verse 20. "...and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him." Luke again points out that Jesus was popular with the people; it was the leaders who had him killed. These two are wondering, "How could God allow this to happen to Jesus?" To them, what their leaders did to him was evil. Then they share what's in their hearts. Read verse 21a. "But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel." They're tired of living under Roman oppression. Because Jesus was full of God's power, they were hoping he would be the one to rescue them. But when he was crucified, this hope was totally crushed. Losing hope is no small matter. In fact, to lose hope is dangerous. If we lose hope, we start saying and doing the wrong things, and going in the wrong direction.

They continue. Read verses 21–24. They don't remember that Jesus said he would rise in three days. They know what happened to the women, but they don't realize how it proves that Jesus has risen. They don't see it even when some of them go to the tomb and find things just as the women said, confirming that it's true. Without spiritual understanding, even the facts make no sense.

What does Jesus do? Read verses 25–27. Jesus gently rebukes them for being so foolish and slow of heart to believe God's words. Then he patiently goes over the whole Bible with them. He teaches what it all says about himself. He teaches that his death and resurrection actually *had* to happen; it was God's will. Through his death and resurrection God finally accomplished the world salvation plan he'd been promising all along. Jesus went through the whole Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi, and how it all points to his suffering, death and resurrection. In light of

the Holy Scriptures, what happened to Jesus was far from a failure; it was God's greatest victory, victory over the power of sin and death, and it promises all who believe a living hope in the kingdom of God. Just as the angels reminded the women of the words of Jesus, so Jesus reminds these two of all the Scriptures. It tells us that just knowing all the facts about Jesus' life, death and resurrection is not enough. We need to see what it all means based on Scripture. And even *that* is not enough. We need to have our eyes opened (31a).

### III. "He went in to stay with them" (28–32)

After a long Bible study with this stranger while walking on the road, they finally draw near the village of Emmaus (28a). Verse 28b says of Jesus, "He acted as if he were going farther..." Why does he do that? Is he trying not to inconvenience them? No, he's showing an important principle. Only those who really want to be with him can actually know him. In the big picture, knowing the Risen Jesus personally doesn't depend on our will or exertion but on God who has mercy (Rom.9:16). But during his ministry Jesus did say, repeatedly: "Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks he has will be taken away" (8:18; cf. 19:26). If we want to experience the Risen Jesus and his presence, we need the strong desire to know him.

Read verse 29. "...but they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.' So he went in to stay with them." In a sense, they're practicing good hospitality for a stranger; they don't want him to have to go out into the night with no place to stay. But their urging is so much more than that. They've begun to enjoy the way this man has been explaining the Scriptures to them. And they're not satisfied with what they've already heard. They want to know him more. So they strongly urge him to stay. In Acts, Luke uses this same Greek word to describe how Lydia got Apostle Paul and his team to come to her house ("prevailed upon us" [Acts 16:15b]). So, in light of these two followers' urgent request, how much do we really want Jesus to stay with us?

Verse 29b says, "So he went in to stay with them." This is written in understatement. But this one sentence captures the goal of the gospel, God's goal—that God might stay with us, dwell with us.<sup>1</sup> God is holy; we are sinful. But now, through the death and resurrection of Jesus his Son, God can stay with us, dwell with us, forever. God dwelling with human beings is not just for special people; it's for every ordinary believer who knows and loves Jesus. Our Lord Jesus once said, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (John 14:23). Jesus said "anyone." The Bible tells us that Christ dwells in each believer by faith, through the Holy Spirit (e.g. Rom.8:9–11; Eph.3:17a). The Apostle Paul said that God, in his faithfulness, has called you "into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor.1:9). The Apostle John wrote: "...that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3). Intimate personal fellowship with the Risen Jesus is available to every believer. This is what our focus should be.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ex.29:46; Lev.26:12; 2 Cor.6:16b; Rev.21:3.

Actually, it's only through such genuine fellowship with him that we can serve him. When God brought the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, they wanted to use God to get them to the promised land flowing with milk and honey. But with such a lack of interest in being with God, God didn't want to go with them; he was ready to send them on ahead without him (Ex.33:3). Like them, we often want to just use Jesus to bless us, heal us, help us, make our ministry fruitful. But do we really want *him*? Above all else, he wants to come in and stay with us. Do we want fellowship with him most of all, more than anything else? Such fellowship can't happen by just looking at the Bible for an hour once a week, only talking or debating about it. It happens when we invite Jesus into our lives, into our relationships, and want him to stay with us, dwell with us. We do this not only privately and personally; like these two, we invite him to stay together with us. We can do it as a couple, as a family, and as a fellowship. Only when we really want to know Jesus and urge him to come and stay with us will his presence become real among us and truly bless us. Frankly, so many people when they were children were wounded, because everyone was too busy to stay with them. Spending time with people, listening, sharing and eating, can seem like a waste of time, but it's not. In light of this passage, we need to prioritize "staying with" his people, developing deeper personal relationships in Christ.

What happens next? Look at verses 30–31. It seems that during his ministry, whenever they ate meals, Jesus had a trademark way of breaking bread. Obviously these two had seen him do it before. Only Jesus broke bread like *that!* And at this moment, God finally opened their eyes to see him. It was Jesus risen from the dead that they'd been with all along!

How do they respond? Read verse 32. Before the Risen Jesus drew near to them, they'd been sad (17b). They'd lost hope (21a). And their hearts had been slow to believe (25). But after encountering the Risen Jesus and hearing him explain the Scriptures, now their hearts are burning (32). Jesus' Bible study lit a fire under them. Now they're so comforted, excited, and full of hope—all at the same time. May the Risen Jesus himself bless our Bible studies to give us a deep understanding of the gospel, and awareness of his own presence, until our hearts burn within us.

#### IV. They returned to Jerusalem (33–35)

Without being told, these two realize what God wants them to do. Though it's a scary place to them, they rise that same hour and return to Jerusalem (33a). They find the eleven and those who are with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" (33b–34) They're talking about Simon Peter. Then these two get to tell their own story, how they studied the Scriptures with the Risen Jesus on the road to Emmaus, and how they recognized him when he broke the bread (35). Clearly, it's the Risen Jesus holding them all together and making their fellowship possible. And he's not done; he's about to prepare them all for a brand new mission.

Let's read our key verse, verse 29 again. May we urge the Risen Jesus strongly to stay with us, dwell with us, and fill our hearts with faith, hope, and joy.